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ABSTRACT

In an attempt to stimulate discussion on directions and priorities for the California community colleges (CCC), this monograph examines six issues likely to affect the colleges during the 1980's. The monograph first reviews recent literature pointing to an erosion of the colleges' transfer, vocational, and general education functions and then discusses the following concerns: (1) overcoming the image of "two-year colleges" and assuming the role of lifelong learning centers; (2) improving the implementation of open-admissions policies through student assessment, screening, and placement in courses and programs appropriate to their skills and abilities; (3) improving articulation with high schools and utilizing newly created high school graduation proficiency exams as competency standards for entering freshmen; (4) allocating affirmative action funds to programs to recruit minority students into transfer programs and programs for severely disadvantaged minority adults; (5) determining the extent to which colleges should provide remediation; and (6) maintaining the transfer function in light of the declining number of transfer students and the efforts of public four-year colleges to raise academic standards. The report concludes with a discussion of the growing number of nontraditional students in the CCC system since 1960 and is appended by a bibliography and a classification scheme of instructional and community services. (JP)

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COMMISSION REPORT 81-14
MAY 1981

MISSIONS AND FUNCTIONS OF THE CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

one in a series
of staff papers for discussion

JC 810416

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PREFACE

The California Postseconary Education Commission is charged by the Legislature, among its other responsibilities, to serve "as a stimulus to the segments and institutions of postsecondary education by projecting and identifying societal and educational needs and encouraging adaptability to change." As part of this function, the Commission plans to issue discussion papers periodically on important issues facing postsecondary education in California. The present paper, the first in this series, has been prepared by the staff of the Commission for consideration by groups interested in the California Community Colleges. It contains only one explicit conclusion and no recommendations. Its intent is to stimulate widespread discussion of directions and priorities for the Community Colleges in the 1980s, from which recommendations might well flow in the future.

Issues of mission and function cannot be isolated from those related to funding, particularly when requests for funding for education and other State-supported functions exceed projected State revenues. However, the genesis of the paper was not the budgetary problems faced by the Community Colleges and the State. Instead, questions about the effectiveness of the Community Colleges in meeting the increasingly diverse educational needs of the adult population in California lead to its conception, on the assumption that unless the colleges make programatic choices and set budget priorities they will probably do many things less well and some things unsatisfactorily in the future.

Although this paper is addressed to the Community Colleges, it has implications for other segments of education--the schools on the one hand, and other postsecondary institutions on the other--because of the interrelationship of functions among them and the Community Colleges. Some subjects receive less attention in the paper than might have been expected because they are now being debated by the Legislature--for example, adult education--or are being considered by Commission staff in other studies--for example, remedial education. The major purpose of this paper is to stimulate discussion of a wide range of educational issues which cut across missions and functions, without dealing with each specific function which the Community Colleges perform.

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QUESTIONS ABOUT THE TRADITIONAL MISSIONS OF THE CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

In 1976, the most important conclusion of a Commission study of California Community College students which was submitted to the Legislature was that "continuing education for part-time, adult students has become the dominant function of the Community Colleges, with no resultant neglect of the occupational, transfer, and general education functions for more traditional students." 1/ Now, five years later, the validity of that conclusion is in doubt. Both research reports and writings about the Community Colleges question whether these traditional missions of offering transfer programs, occupational preparation and general education are suffering in comparison with continuing education.

A few examples will illustrate the current questioning of Community College missions and functions for the 1980s.

Transfer Programs

The number of Community College students transferring to the University of California has been declining, as has the persistence and academic performance of these transfers. A 1980 report from the University's task force on retention and transfer concludes in its Executive Summary, "If we continue on the present downward spiral, many Community Colleges will not articulate with the University of California, because they will not be able to afford to offer the vocational and community service programs their students demand as well as the breadth and quality of program that will prepare students for the University of California." 2/ And a 1979 report prepared by the California State University and Colleges revealed that less than one in three Community College students who transferred to the State University and Colleges in the Fall 1975 term had graduated from the campus where the student first enrolled after three years on campus, and only 34 percent of them had graduated from any campus in the system. 3/

Occupational Preparation

In an article titled "The False Promises of Community Colleges: Class Conflict and Vocational Education," Fred L. Pincus has surveyed the literature of postsecondary vocational education nationally for more than a decade and reports that relatively few published studies with systematic, large-scale follow-up data on students document the economic payoff to vocational students in Community Colleges. He concludes that the available data raise serious questions about this payoff and that the findings are still inconclusive, at best, with respect to the advantages of vocational

preparation in Community Colleges in comparison with high school preparation on the one hand and with nonvocational college education on the other. 4/ Studies by Wellford Wilms, although roundly criticized by professionals in both vocational education and postsecondary education, tend to support Pincus' conclusion. Comparing students in selected vocational education programs in both Community Colleges and proprietary schools in four major metropolitan areas, Wilms found a poor record of placement of both graduates and dropouts from the programs, particularly in what he called "upper level" vocational programs--accounting, computer programming, and electronic technology. 5/

General Education

The general education function of the California Community Colleges has recently been subjected to new examination and debate, in large part as a result of impending changes in the graduation requirements of the State University involving general education and related requirements for transfer students. In a report to the Commission in March which explored current issues in general education, including implications of these changes for articulation, the Commission staff concluded:

> . . . the current activity regarding general education within the Community Colleges seems largely to be a reaction to the proposed changes within the State University system rather than the direct result of any desire for constructive change initiated by the Community Colleges themselves. The Community Colleges also need to assume a position of active leadership in the area of general education while recognizing the need for flexibility and compromise if the State's system of higher education is to work on behalf of the students. 6/

Controversy also exists within the Community Colleges over the Chancellor's recommended classification system for instructional and community services of the Community Colleges, a copy of which is included in Appendix B. Although the Commission staff concluded that the classification system is a useful approach to describing the very diverse offerings of the Community Colleges and recommended its implementation in connection with updating the State-level computer course file for 1980-81, the system has been opposed strongly by several Community College groups and individuals, both on the grounds that it could not be used to describe new Community College offerings for new student clienteles who would enroll in the 1980s and on the grounds that the categories in the system are ambiguous, overly complex, and of little use to the colleges.

The direction in which Community College missions and functions such as these might proceed for the 1980s can perhaps best be sketched in terms of six major issues confronting the Community Colleges: (1) overcoming the myth of the "two-year college," (2) rethinking open enrollment within open admission, (3) improving articulation with the secondary schools, (4) reconsidering student affirmative action, (5) providing remediation, and (6) assuring transfer. All of these issues are interrelated. However, because of their complexity, they will be discussed individually.

OVERCOMING THE MYTH OF THE "TWO-YEAR COLLEGE"

The fundamental issue relating to Community College missions and functions concerns the limits, if any, that are desirable on their offerings and clienteles. Although the Community Colleges continue to offer one- and two-year curricula leading to certificates, degrees, and transfer, their image as "two-year" postsecondary institutions offering instruction at the thirteenth and fourteenth grade levels for college freshmen and sophomores no longer suffices. They do not offer courses for upper division or graduate credit, but they enroll students holding associate, baccalaureate, and advanced degrees, most of whom are not working for degrees or certificates. At the same time, they offer instruction below what is regarded as "college level," to help both high school graduates and dropouts with deficiencies in basic skills to increase their ability to succeed in college-level instruction.

Only a minority of Community College students complete programs prescribed by the faculties. About one-third of them enroll for only one term, and fewer than 20 percent graduate or are still enrolled by the end of their third year. About three-fourths enroll part time, and the modal student workload is one course. The colleges are authorized to offer both credit and noncredit courses, but many use only the credit mode. Students may not "audit" courses, but provisions for withdrawing from courses without penalty are quite liberal for students who do not want credit or who are failing. Although the commitment of the State is to two years of free public education in the Community Colleges, there is no prohibition against students enrolling throughout their lifetime, without respect to the number or levels of degrees held (or none at all). And there is now relatively little congruence between most of the colleges' catalogues and the institutions they purport to describe.

In a statement prepared for use in discussions of the recent Brookings Institution study of Community College finance, David Breneman and S.C. Nelson comment that:

> Many presidents want their institutions to become community-based centers for lifelong learning, with public support provided for virtually any educational activity desired by any group within the community. The principal objective of these presidents seems to be to maximize enrollments (or the percentage of the district population served), keeping tuition rates as low as possible, while state officials increasingly seek to limit the state's financial obligation to the colleges by imposing enrollment ceilings, by excluding certain courses or activities from support, and by various other means. 7/

The intent of this present paper is not to find fault with such presidents' aspirations, but to ask, if this statement does indeed characterize the California Community Colleges, what aspects of "college" and of "higher education" should be preserved. Present policies, practices, and programs tend to have been framed with traditional college calendars and college students in mind--for example, the prescribed two-year curriculum for full-time students. The issue is whether the colleges could serve their communities more efficiently and effectively if they were to become community centers for lifelong learning, thereby abandoning some vestiges of higher education such as rigid calendars related to unit credit.

One alternative to the present mode of operation is for the Community Colleges to offer all courses on a noncredit basis but with a credit option for students wanting to meet certain standards and requirements. This alternative was considered during the Commission Open Door study because of the significantly greater flexibility which is associated with the noncredit mode, but it was not recommended because of its rather radical nature, compared with the present organization and offerings of the colleges. 8/ However, if the diversity of Community College students' needs and interests continues to expand, some transformation of the historical image of the Community Colleges will be necessary.

RETHINKING OPEN ENROLLMENT WITHIN OPEN ADMISSIONS

The current Community College practice of open enrollment and open admissions tends to attract some students who cannot do the assigned work because of inadequate skills but were not counseled prior to enrollment, others who are capable of succeeding but do not want to work for course credit, and still others who need to have the courses taught at the college level for degree or transfer credit.

The basic question of open admissions is the viability of an open-door philosophy, without conditions. At issue is the extent to which

the Community Colleges should adapt their course requirements and teaching methods to the declining levels of basic skills exhibited by their students, when an open-door policy prevails in enrolling anyone at least eighteen years of age in almost any course, as well as in the college at large. California has had a long-standing commitment to making opportunity for postsecondary education available to all high school graduates through the Community Colleges, with the further opportunity to earn a baccalaureate degree available to anyone successfully completing a transfer program.

This commitment was affirmed in the 1960 Master Plan for Higher Education in California 9/ and in subsequent legislation. The Legislature also made provision for the admission of any applicant at least eighteen years of age "who, in the judgment of the board or of the president . . ., is capable of profiting from the instruction offered." 10/ Although the law calls for this judgment of capability to be made, the Community Colleges have assumed that any adult who applies is able to benefit in some way from their offerings. At best, this assumption offers an open-ended opportunity to students who would be ineligible for admission to other postsecondary institutions but whose potential for success in college exceeds what would have been predicted from their high school record. At the other extreme, the benefits are said to include the experience of failure on the part of students who were unrealistic about their ability to succeed in college, and socialization for those who had little expectation of succeeding.

The issue at this time is not whether to abandon the philosophy of open-door admission to the Community Colleges but instead to improve the way in which it is implemented with respect to both high school graduates and dropouts. The first question related to implementation may be summarized as that of advisement: Should systematic evaluation of student basic skills be made a condition for enrollment, using high school transcripts or test results, or both, followed by counseling and placement in courses, for all first-time students? A second question relates to screening: Should some type of screening be instituted of students enrolling in credit courses and programs, while retaining open admission to the colleges of all applicants at least eighteen years old? Consider each of these questions in turn.

Using Tools for Counseling and Advising

Community College policies governing the submission of high school transcripts by first-time students vary widely, but few if any colleges deny enrollment to students who do not comply with their requirement. Many colleges feel that high school transcripts are not useful in counseling students about placement in courses and

programs, especially for older students who have been out of school for some time. In a recent survey of admissions practices, more than 40 percent of the colleges reported that they require some types of new students to submit high school transcripts--for example, those intending to transfer or work toward an associate degree, or those less than eighteen years old (who may be required to provide proof of high school graduation unless they are admitted under special provisions)--but many respondents commented that compliance with the requirement is low. 11/

The alternative of systematic assessment of basic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics as part of the placement process was also abandoned some years ago by most Community Colleges, except on a voluntary basis. Standardized testing fell into disrepute, particularly for students from ethnic minority groups, and the opinion was prevalent among the colleges that a testing requirement as a condition of enrollment was illegal as well as unfair, and likely to discourage some students from enrolling. There is now what appears to be a trend toward the systematic assessment of the basic skills of more students by more Community Colleges, although practice varies widely in terms of who is tested, with what instruments, for what purposes, and with what degree of compulsion. Assessment is most likely to occur in connection with enrollment in the standard English composition course which is offered for transfer credit. It is least likely to be required of part-time students without degree or transfer objectives. The purpose is most often to provide a basis for advisement about the student's need for some kind and level of remediation in reading or writing skills, with the decision left to the student concerning the appropriate course of action for him or her to take.

Screening Unqualified Students

The 1980 report to the Legislature from the Chancellor's Office of the California Community Colleges, Credit and Noncredit Courses in the California Community Colleges, included a recommendation that the Chancellor evaluate the merits of (1) a certified level of competence for admission to a transfer program; (2) the use of a passing score on the high school proficiency examinations as a prerequisite for enrollment in credit courses, an associate degree program, or a transfer program; and (3) demonstrated proficiency in basic skills as a requirement for the associate degree. The Commission agreed with the recommendation in its comments to the Legislature on the report 12/, and urged that the matter be given a high priority by the Chancellor's Office.

The issue of the Community Colleges' responsibility for offering some type of instruction from which each student has a reasonable chance of profiting thus remains unclear, as does the place of

mandatory assessment and counseling to insure that students who lack the skills to succeed in college-level work are placed in courses and programs appropriate to their skills and abilities at entrance.

IMPROVING SECONDARY SCHOOL ARTICULATION

The third issue, which is related in part to the second of open admissions, is the need for new and better articulation with secondary schools, both locally and regionally. It has at least three facets, beginning with the impact of the new proficiency examinations for high school graduation.

Using the New Proficiency Examinations Effectively

Implementation this year of the requirement that high school students pass proficiency examinations as a condition for high school graduation should raise the priority of articulation discussions for the Community Colleges, since the requirement both offers opportunity and creates problems for them. Because both the instruments and the standards for the measurement of proficiencies are established by local school districts, the colleges have an opportunity to work with their feeder schools in setting expectations about the levels of skills needed for college work. One of the first issues to be addressed is whether the basic skill levels required for high school graduation are high enough for Community College work. In other words, will local high school graduates with minimum passing scores on the proficiency tests have a reasonable chance of succeeding in the courses normally prescribed for first-time freshmen? If not, can the Community Colleges establish guidelines about higher levels which students should attempt to reach before high school graduation? A further question will be whether the tests are sufficiently discriminating to be useful in setting expectations about minimum skills needed for certain Community College courses and programs, such as transfer programs or general education courses which satisfy associate degree requirements.

Raising the issue of Community College use of high school proficiency examinations in setting expectations about the preparation of their first-time freshmen should not be interpreted as a call for selective admissions standards. Instead, their use might save time on the part of the students, and money on the part of the State, by increasing the readiness of high school graduates to begin college-level work as freshmen in the Community Colleges. Although recent high school graduates comprise less than half the first-time freshmen in Community Colleges and account for scarcely more than 10 percent of the colleges' enrollment for credit, more than 40 percent of the

graduates enroll in a Community College as soon as they graduate. Furthermore, almost three-fourths of the high school graduates who go on to college in California enroll in a Community College as freshmen, usually at the college which is closest to home. 13/ Therefore, improved articulation between secondary schools and Community Colleges with respect to setting expectations concerning levels of basic skills to be achieved before college enrollment appears to be one possible approach to increasing efficiency in the transition of students from secondary to postsecondary education.

Avoiding Disincentives for Students to Complete High School

Community Colleges may provide a disincentive for students who fail the proficiency examinations in the tenth or eleventh grade to stay in high school, take advantage of whatever remedial services the schools offer, and work toward fulfillment of high school graduation requirements, when the alternative of admission to a Community College at age eighteen is offered without conditions. For the first time, the high schools will, in a sense, be certifying the lack of competence of some of their students for college work, by withholding the diploma from those who do not pass the examinations. A recent report from the State Department of Education contained an estimate that 24 percent of the twelfth grade students, as of Fall 1980, might fail to receive their diplomas in June 1981. 14/ About 12 percent would not graduate because they did not pass the proficiency tests; 8 percent would fail both the proficiency tests and course requirements; and 4 percent would not have met district course requirements. Others may drop out before graduation for reasons which are not directly related to the proficiency test requirement. In addition to the issue of the relationship between open-door admissions and motivation to graduate from high school, there is a further issue of what kinds of programs and services the Community Colleges should provide for this new group of high school dropouts (or nongraduates). Until now, students with deficiencies in basic skills graduated from high school and enrolled in Community College courses and programs of their choice, usually without remediation. Verification by the high schools of the inadequacy of the basic skills of some students appears to create a dilemma for the Community Colleges. Should such students be required to complete some alternative type of high school program? To complete remediation offered for students with minimum basic skills? Or should they continue to be given no different treatment than high school graduates, as at present?

Meeting the Needs of University-Bound Students

Increased cooperation between the secondary schools and the Community Colleges may be desirable in order to expand school offerings for University-bound students. Secondary schools in many

parts of the State are experiencing a decline in enrollments, changes in the demographic characteristics of their students, and inadequate funding, at a time when the University and the State University are raising their expectations regarding the preparation of first-time freshmen. The potential of the Community Colleges for offering additional work for high school students preparing to enroll in four-year institutions as freshmen deserves to be more widely explored so as to ascertain whether there is sufficient commonality in the abilities of University-bound high school students and those in the Community Colleges to make such articulation arrangements workable.

RECONSIDERING STUDENT AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

The issue of affirmative action for disadvantaged students, especially Blacks and Chicanos, involves two separate problems: one involving potential transfer students, the other concerning severely disadvantaged students.

Aiding Potential Transfer Students

This first problem centers on identifying, retaining, and preparing for transfer to the University and the State University those students who are interested and have the potential to succeed in upper division programs. In the past two decades, the Community Colleges were in the forefront of institutions in enrolling Blacks, Chicanos, and other disadvantaged students. Thus, as of Fall 1979, among Blacks and Chicanos who enrolled in public higher education right after high school graduation, more than 80 percent were attending Community Colleges. 15/ Now, the University and the State University are mounting outreach and preparation programs in the junior and senior high schools with the goal of increasing the motivation and eligibility of disadvantaged students for admission at the freshman level. The Commission has called for intersegmental cooperation and coordination in offering State-funded outreach programs, but the role of the Community Colleges in the 1980s vis a vis the University and the State University is not yet clear. If the University and State University programs are successful in getting large numbers of Blacks and Chicanos prepared for University work while in high school, the Community Colleges may either show a decline in the enrollment of such students or increase recruitment from groups which are dropping out of high school in increasing numbers--that is, those who are less well prepared for college than those who are now enrolled in the Community Colleges. The issue for the 1980s appears to be the nature and scope of the Community College mission with respect to maintaining (or increasing) their current level of enrollment of students from ethnic minority groups, particularly Blacks and Chicanos. More specifically, would students

among the disadvantaged from ethnic minority groups who have academic potential for and interest in working toward a baccalaureate degree be better served as first-time freshmen in the University or the State University than in the Community Colleges?

At the request of the Legislature, a joint committee comprised of representatives of the three segments prepared a report in 1979 on Increasing the Rate and Retention of Community College Transfer Students from Underrepresented Groups, on which the Commission was requested to provide comments to the Legislature. 16/ The Commission expressed reservations concerning the proposals for the identification of potential transfer students by the Community Colleges, since identification was to have been done by computer when students completed their Community College programs. Yet this problem of identifying and preparing disadvantaged students for upper division programs remains.

(A parallel concern might well be expressed for affirmative action programs and goals for students with disabilities--learning disabilities and physical, mental, and emotional impairments. However, since funding and services for students with disabilities in all segments of higher education is now a subject for negotiation in connection with the 1981-82 budget, minimum attention will be given in this paper to this part of the Community College mission.)

Helping the Severely Disadvantaged

A different kind of question involves the extent to which the Community Colleges should encourage minority ethnic group members to enroll who are severely disadvantaged in terms of prior educational attainment. While California ranks well among the states in terms of the percentage of the adult populations which has completed high school, it is estimated that 4.5 million people, or 32 percent of the adult population in California, had less than a high school education in 1974. An issue of some concern is the appropriateness of this population of undereducated adults as a new target group for student affirmative action by the Community Colleges, particularly those with limited English-speaking ability and from ethnic minority groups. The underlying issue is one which concerns the best use of scarce State resources for affirmative action, with choices probably having to be made between programs for disadvantaged students who can be prepared for college and university work in a relatively short period of time, and those for adults who are severely disadvantaged, in terms of education and economics, which would be costly as a postsecondary function of the Community Colleges.

PROVIDING REMEDIATION

The role of the Community Colleges in providing remediation programs is also an issue facing the colleges, but for the purposes of this paper it is of lesser magnitude than those involving their "two-year" image, their open-door philosophy, their articulation with secondary schools, or their affirmative action programs. Remediation in postsecondary education is also the subject of a major Commission staff project which has started only recently. However, several questions are particularly pertinent to Community Colleges. The first is that of whether there should be some floor below which the Community Colleges should not go in offering remedial programs and courses in reading, writing, and mathematical skills, except in Adult Basic Education (ABE) courses, high school equivalency programs, and classes in elementary school subjects offered on a noncredit basis.

A second question involves the extent to which faculty should adapt their courses to the level of basic skills exhibited by the students in their classes, in terms of pacing instruction, choice of textbooks and other materials, assignments involving reading and writing, and evaluation leading to grades.

A third question, in a somewhat different area, involves the ability of the Community Colleges to join with statewide faculty groups in the University and the State University in developing clear statements of expectations concerning the levels of basic skills which students enrolling in the Community Colleges after high school graduation should be able to demonstrate. This question raises further issues of whether the principle of local autonomy for the Community Colleges obviates this type of statewide effort, and the widespread opposition to standardized testing or other formal assessment for placement in Community College courses.

Finally, a fourth question involves the feasibility of developing a timetable for moving the remediation function to another segment or segments, that is, from the University and the State University to the Community Colleges, and from the Community Colleges to the secondary or adult schools, and, eventually, out of postsecondary education at State expense.

ASSURING TRANSFER

The viability of the Community Colleges' transfer function came into question most dramatically with the publication last year of the University task force report on Retention and Transfer. The issue

involves the volume of transfer students from individual colleges, particularly to the University; the readiness of these transfer students to undertake upper division work, in terms of their basic skills and preparation for the major; and articulation of courses and programs, including general education.

So far, there is little likelihood of the transfer function losing vitality in all Community Colleges in the 1980s. But there is growing concern about the very small number of students transferring to the University from particular Community Colleges. In Fall 1979, thirty-nine of the seventy Community College districts had fewer than fifty students transferring to the University, among them Chaffey, Mt. San Antonio, San Jose, Shasta, and State Center (Fresno), each of which had more than ten thousand students enrolled for credit that year. 17/ Unless the number of potential University transfer students increases in the 1980s, some Community Colleges may conclude that they can no longer commit the resources which are needed to offer the courses which would fulfill lower division requirements in the University, for example, for engineering and physical science majors, and in the foreign languages.

It is most unlikely that the Community Colleges would give up their transfer function. However, it is not clear that the broad articulation agreements of the past will continue to work in the 1980s, under which any Community College student with a grade-point average of C or better in fifty-six units of college work would have an opportunity to transfer into a baccalaureate program. The University and the State University are raising their expectations concerning the preparation of first-time freshmen for University-level work. To the extent that the four-year segments are successful in bringing this about, the vitality of the Community College transfer function may be reduced in at least two ways. First, the level of competition for grades in upper division courses will probably increase as a consequence of better preparation for University work on the part of first-time freshmen, particularly if the Community Colleges take no comparable action to raise expectations about pre-college preparation. Community Colleges will need to increase the quality of competition for grades in transfer program courses, to insure that potential transfer students are prepared to compete with "native" students in upper division courses. Second, the University and the State University will probably divert to the Community Colleges freshmen who are unable or unwilling to meet the higher standards at entrance, with some likelihood that the four-year segments may then find it necessary to raise expectations concerning the preparation of transfer students. Stated another way, open enrollment in University-transfer courses of students with low levels of basic skills may have a negative effect on the achievement levels of students who are preparing to transfer, if instructors try to meet the needs of all students

enrolled in their classes. The danger appears to be greater in large Community Colleges where a small number of University-transfer students may receive little attention from counselors and faculty teaching transfer courses than in small institutions where a very small number of transfer students may be more easily identified for special attention.

A different kind of issue may emerge with respect to the State University in the 1980s. Chancellor Dumke announced in his report to the Board of Trustees of the California State University and Colleges in March that he would ask faculty and administrators "to give immediate consideration to modifying our entrance requirements . . . . We must be sure that students who are admitted to our campuses have learned to read, write, and do mathematics at an appropriate level, and that they have a background sufficient to make effective teaching possible on our campuses." 18/ While his statement pertained to the admission of first-time freshmen, there are obvious implications for Community College transfer students who have been enrolling at a rate of about 1.9 transfers to each first-time freshman in the State University. 19/ The issue concerns the need to modify transfer admission requirements to the State University so as to parallel whatever new freshman requirements may be adopted with respect to competency in reading, writing, and mathematics. Such a modification would have the objectives of (1) discouraging high school students from avoiding the new requirements by enrolling in a Community College for their lower division work, and (2) insuring that transfer students with advanced standing are fully prepared to succeed in upper division work.

(At the present time, Community College students who were not eligible for State University admission as freshmen may transfer to the State University with an average of C (2.0) in at least fifty-six semester units of credit which the Community Colleges have certified as baccalaureate-level work. Good information about performance after transfer is not yet available statewide, except for State University graduation rates which appear to be indicative of unsatisfactory performance, 20/ and the results of limited testing of the writing skills of transfer students. 21/)

Some would argue that the issue to be discussed should be the need for the University and the State University to modify their policies, practices, and programs so as to attract and retain larger numbers of transfer students from the Community Colleges. The Commission and the segments have been charged by the Legislature from time to time to identify barriers to such transfer and to make recommendations for reducing or overcoming them. It appears unlikely that either the University or the State University would make any significant changes which would grant more responsibility for transfer and articulation to the Community Colleges at this time. Instead, the

faculty of these systems appear to be moving in the direction of tightening standards and requirements for both transfer and "native" students seeking traditional baccalaureate degrees. However, the possibility of a new kind of degree for transfer students from technical and other "high-level" occupational programs in the Community Colleges may be an issue worthy of exploration, particularly in light of increased student interest in all segments in programs which prepare them for employment.

Finally, mention should be made of the issues related to the certification by the Community Colleges of courses to meet State University general education requirements and courses taught at the baccalaureate level for transfer to either the University or the State University. Some of the issues have already been set forth in the Commission paper on general education; 22/ others may come to the attention of the Commission later this year in connection with reports of the Commission Task Force on Admissions and Articulation.

CONCLUSION

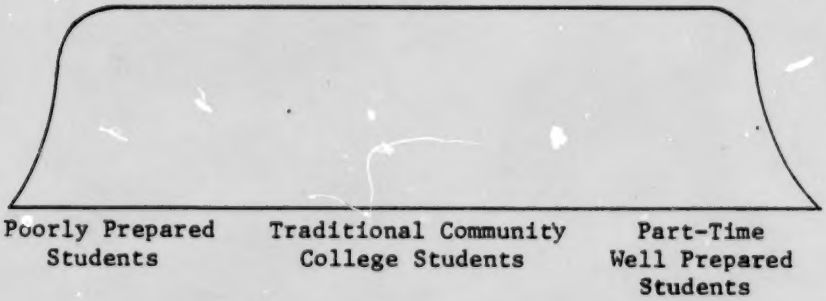
The California Community Colleges gained their reputation as a full partner in higher education in the 1960s by absorbing a major portion of the increase in lower division enrollments and preparing many of these students for transfer to the University and the State University. This reputation extended to the function of preparing large numbers of students for transfer who were not able to meet freshman admission requirements for the University and the State University when they graduated from high school but who could gain eligibility in the Community Colleges. The Community Colleges also became known during this era for their excellence in vocational and technical programs leading to degrees and certificates.

The fundamental problem now facing the Community Colleges is their ability to cope with the ever-increasing diversity of their students. During the last twenty years, the Community Colleges--faculty, programs, services--have changed more slowly than the characteristics of their students. There is a reluctance in the Community Colleges to establish priorities among student clienteles, programs, and services; and they may be increasingly unable to do everything well by being continually more efficient and more productive. If choices and priorities are not made, the result will probably be to do everything less well and some things unsatisfactorily.

The increasing diversity of the student population in the Community Colleges may be illustrated by a series of three simple images. In the early 1960s, at the time of the Master Plan for Higher Education

in California, the Community College student population could be depicted as a bell-shaped curve, with a large majority of the students fitting the description, "young, Caucasian, high school graduates, enrolled full time in programs leading to degrees, certificates, and transfer." Some who were called "late bloomers" were at the lower end of the curve--students who had done poor work in high school but showed potential for succeeding in college-level work. Others were at the other end of the curve--"defined adults" and others enrolled part time who probably had not been to college elsewhere.

By the time of the Commission's study, Through the Open Door, in the mid-1970s, the curve had flattened to the shape of a rectangle, with large increases in the numbers of students who were educationally and economically disadvantaged, many of them from ethnic minority groups, and with a critical need for remedial programs and services. Increases at the other end were similar in size--more students over the age of twenty-one, with diverse short-term objectives for enrolling, and often with a substantial amount of postsecondary education in another type of institution.



During the 1980s, the Community College student population may come to resemble a bi-modal curve, with two large concentrations of students: at one end, those with serious educational handicaps, including the developmentally disabled, as well as the non- or limited-English speaking, refugees, unemployed workers, and others from the lower strata of society whose needs for postsecondary education can be met only at a relatively high cost--and at the other, relatively well-educated adults for whom education is a part-time, irregular pursuit, including "reverse transfers" from the University, with a wide range of interest in almost anything the college offers, without respect to credit. Students who constituted the majority in the 1960s have not diminished in numbers. Instead, the growth of other student constituencies has been so large as to make the majority a minority in the 1980s, at a time when fewer young people may be enrolling in degree and transfer programs. These new student constituencies have increased the demand for community education, English as a second language, short-term vocational training, and instruction in the creative and performing arts, as well as the more traditional general education and occupational courses.

In order to maintain their peak enrollments, Community Colleges may find it necessary to seek new sources of students at both ends of this continuum, many of whom will not be well served by traditional offerings and faculty. Stated in the extreme, the issue is how Community Colleges can offer instruction for credit to students with reading and writing skills ranging from sixth grade through a level required for study at the graduate level, and with objectives ranging from "transfer to the University" to "personal interest, with no credit desired."

Much of the public still tends to view the Community College as a two-year, sometimes "junior" college, with transfer and occupational programs, rather than a community-based institution with education programs for all adults. There is a certain safety in the old image,

at least with respect to continued public funding with no student charges. However, the issues facing the California Community Colleges lead to the conclusion that these institutions need to debate their multiple functions more fully as a prelude to evolving a statement of common mission for the 1980s and beyond.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Recent Publications on Community College Missions

This Commission paper is only one of many recent essays which raise questions about the role of the Community Colleges in the 1980s. David Breneman's summary of issues from his study of Community College finance for the Brookings Institution has already been cited. 23/ A 1980 issue of New Directions for Community Colleges was devoted to "Questioning the Community College Role." 24/ A Topical Paper of the ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges in 1979 dealt with The Decline of Transfer Education. 25/ More recently, an article in the Journal of Higher Education discussed "Community Colleges on the Plateau," with the conclusion that these institutions have not yet found a common mission and new ideals for the 1980s, to replace their earlier sense of common purpose. 26/ Finally, attention is called to The Impossible Dream? Financing the Community College's Evolving Mission, a new publication of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges. 27/ None of the references cited deals exclusively with the California Community Colleges, which are the largest and most complex institutions of their kind; but all of them are applicable to California Community Colleges because of the particular constraints on public funding that these institutions face.

FOOTNOTES

1/ Through the Open Door: A Study of Patterns of Enrollment and Performance in California's Community Colleges, California Postsecondary Education Commission, February 1976, p. i.

2/ Retention and Transfer: A Report of the Task Force, University of California, Office of the Academic Vice President, June 1980.

3/ Those Who Stay - Phase II: Student Continuance in the California State University and Colleges (Technical Memorandum Number Eight), Division of Institutional Research, Office of the Chancellor, and the California State University and Colleges, May 1979.

4/ Fred L. Pincus, "The False Promises of Community Colleges: Class Conflict and Vocational Education," Harvard Educational Review, 50:3 (August 1980), p. 332.

5/ Wellford W. Wilms, Vocational Education and Social Mobility: A Study of Public and Proprietary School Dropouts and Graduates, Graduate School of Education, University of California, Los Angeles, June 1980. Also Wilms, Public and Proprietary Vocational Training: A Study of Effectiveness (Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Books, 1975).

6/ One World in Common: General Education in a Statewide, National, and Historical Context, California Postsecondary Education Commission, March 1981, p. 29.

7/ D. W. Breneman and S. C. Nelson, "Financing Community Colleges: A Summary of the Issues," unpublished paper, 1981, p. 3.

8/ Through the Open Door, op. cit.

9/ A Master Plan for Higher Education in California, 1960-1975, California State Department of Education, Sacramento, 1960.

10/ Education Code Section 76000.

11/ Report on the Implementation of a "Plan for Obtaining Community College Transfer Student Information," California Postsecondary Education Commission, April 1981, pp. 3-4.

12/ Commission Comments on "Credit and Noncredit Courses in the California Community Colleges: A Report to the Legislature" (from the Chancellor's Office, California Community Colleges),

California Postsecondary Education Commission, December 1980, p. 12.

13/ College-Going Rates in California: 1979 Update (A Summary), California Postsecondary Education Commission, February 1981, p. 3.

14/ Statewide Survey of Pupil Performance on School District Proficiency Assessments: A Report Prepared in Response to the Requirements of Education Code Section 51219, California State Department of Education, March 1981, p. i.

15/ College-Going Rates in California: 1979 Update (A Summary), op. cit. (computed from data in Table 3, p. 8).

16/ Staff Comments on "Increasing the Rate and Retention of Community College Transfers From Underrepresented Groups," California Postsecondary Education Commission, July 1979.

17/ College-Going Rates in California: 1979 Update (Technical Appendices), op. cit., Appendix F.

18/ Glenn S. Dumke, Statement on Teacher Education (to the Board of Trustees of the California State University and Colleges), March 25, 1981, p. 7.

19/ College-Going Rates in California: 1979 Update, op. cit., p. 13.

20/ Those Who Stay - Phase II, op. cit.

21/ Oral statement by Anthony Moye, Dean of Educational Programs and Resources, California State University and Colleges, to the Board of Trustees Committee on Educational Policy, April 22, 1981.

22/ One World in Common: General Education in a Statewide, National, and Historical Context, op. cit.

23/ Breneman and Nelson, op. cit., p. 3.

24/ "Questioning the Community College Role," New Directions for Community Colleges, No. 32, 1980 (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., Publishers).

25/ John Lombardi, The Decline of Transfer Education, Topical Paper Number 70, ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges (Los Angeles), 1979.

26/ K. Patricia Cross, "Community Colleges on the Plateau," Journal of Higher Education, 52:2, 1981, pp. 113-123

27/ R. C. Richardson and L. L. Leslie, The Impossible Dream? Financing the Community College's Evolving Mission, American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, 1981.

APPENDIX B

FIGURE 1

Classification System
for
Instructional and Community Services
of the
California Community Colleges

I. INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES

Instructional services include all classroom lecture and laboratory instruction and independent study offered for credit and instruction offered in a noncredit mode in the areas of adult basic education, personal development and survival, parenting and family support, community and civic development, and trade and industrial/vocational training.

A. Liberal Arts and Sciences Education

Liberal Arts and sciences and general education courses to meet the needs of students of the 13th and 14th grades and courses of study deemed necessary to provide for the civic and liberal education of the citizens of the community.

1. Baccalaureate Oriented Programs and Courses

Courses of study certified as transfer by the local community college. These courses of study are equivalent in educational respects to courses offered at the freshman-sophomore level at four-year institutions of higher education and are recognized by the University of California as part of the required or elective preparation toward a major degree or as part of a general education requirement and are subjected to the published standards for matriculation, attendance, and achievement of the university, college, or system.

2. Associate Degree Programs and Courses

Courses of study of freshman or sophomore college level leading to an Associate Degree as determined by the local district governing board.

Source: Credit and Noncredit Courses in the California Community Colleges: A Report to the Legislature (Chancellor's Office, California Community Colleges, July 1980).

3. Developmental Programs and Courses

Courses of study to develop basic skills in mathematics, reading and English for adults and for helping individuals acquire educational skills and knowledge necessary for pursuing freshman and sophomore level offerings in the community college.

a. Compensatory Programs and Courses

Courses of study to meet the academic and personal needs of educationally disadvantaged students and to bridge the gap between secondary school and college for the student with specifically identified deficiencies.

b. Adult Elementary and Secondary Basic Skills Programs and Courses

Courses of study in basic education and those subjects required for the high school diploma (Education Code Sections 8530 and 8531), and noncredit courses taken for the same purposes as those described in 3.a. above.

4. Community (Continuing) Education Programs and Courses

Courses of study in the liberal arts and sciences determined to be of public (versus private) benefit and designed to assist students and/or students' families to be more self-sufficient and more productive as citizens of the community.

a. Personal Development and Survival Courses

Courses of study designed to assist students with special needs to cope with their special problems and to become independent, participating, healthy persons.

b. Parenting and Family Support Courses

Courses of study designed to strengthen the family as a unit.

c. Community and Civic Development Courses

Courses of study designed to teach adult citizens procedures for effective participation in community and civic improvement.

d. General and Cultural Courses

Courses of study designed to prepare persons for the responsibilities they have in common as citizens in a democracy and to enhance the overall quality of life within a community.

B. Occupational Education

Occupational education courses of study prepare persons for an occupation without the need for subsequent training or education in an institution of higher education. Occupational education courses at a community college may also provide for upgrading of job related skills.

1. Vocational/Technical Associate Degree and Certificate Programs and Courses

Courses of study determined to be of college level providing educational preparation for an occupation at the semi-professional, technical or skilled level (including apprenticeship when offered in the credit instructional mode).

2. Supplementary Vocational Courses

Courses of study determined to be of college level but not in a degree or certificate sequence providing for retaining, upgrading, or advancement in a specific occupation or group of occupations.

3. Trade and Industrial Programs and Courses

Courses of study to provide vocational education services to the public and to meet the particular vocational education needs of the local community including Occupational/Vocational (Education Code Section 8532) programs and apprenticeship programs and home economics programs when offered in the noncredit mode.

II. COMMUNITY SERVICES

Community Services include all noncredit instruction classes and cultural and recreational activities exclusive of those defined under Instructional Services above. Community service classes and activities are characterized by the fact that they serve more personal then public interests.

A. Community Service Classes

Since it is presumed that classes as described below are of more personal than public interest they are categorized as community service classes. Also, when other courses which might be considered properly categorized under Instructional Services are determined to be of more personal than public interest they are offered to adults as community service classes even though they are not included in the following descriptions of community service classes.

1. Avocational Classes

   Classes which meet a personal desire for a specialized though nonprofessional pursuit outside one's regular occupation and that one normally finds interesting, enjoyable, or relaxing.

2. Recreation Classes

   Classes which meet the personal need for play or which restore the individual to health or create his or her energies anew. Recreational classes include classes which require physical activity but are not a part of the physical education instructional services program.

3. Conferences, Seminars, Workshops, and Forums

   Community services education offered in specialized format of short duration to meet specific community needs.

B. Community Service Activities

1. Civic Center Activities

   Activities occurring in community college facilities designated as civic centers in accordance with the provisions of Education Code Sections 82530-82547.

2. Cultural Activities

   Activities of general cultural interest, including visual and performing arts.

3. Community Development Activities

   Activities of particular service to individuals or groups of individuals within the community.

4. Outreach Activities

   Activities of particular service to individuals or groups of individuals who for some reason are not able to participate in general community activities.

5. Recreational Activities

   Activities which are designed to meet the need for play and to restore the individual to health or create his or her energies anew but are not provided in a class setting.

6. Youth Service Activities

   Activities of particular service to youth within the community.

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